

NEWS OF THE THEATRE FOLK



LOTUS ROSS
IN "WHY MARRY?"

CONSTANCE BINNEY, who in the course of two acts of music and merriment in "Oh, Lady, Lady!" at the Princess Theatre develops from a demure little French maid in Quaker dress and white organdy apron into a piquant to dancer, was actually born in New York.

"Elbert Hubbard claimed that no New Yorkers were ever born in this metropolis," says Miss Binney, "but I am concerned, for I wouldn't be born anywhere else but New York; no, not for anything in the whole wide world!"

However, Constance Binney did not intend to leave the one and only city large enough to go to a convent in Paris, where she received all her early education. "Little did I think at that time that my French lessons would stand me in good stead some day behind the proscenium. In those days my parents would have been horrified at the mere mention of my going on the stage, so I kept my ambition to myself and came back to New York and did what all the young girls in the Binney family have done for generations—went to a finishing school at West-Park."

"Less than two years ago, shortly before I was graduated, I spent all my spare time studying modern dancing and secured several private engagements after school hours. It was on one such occasion that Mr. Winthrop Ames saw me dance and told me I had considerable talent for pantomime work, also that I should study ballet dancing and if I began at once he would sign me up for a three year contract."

"I had already taken lessons from Cecchetti, that wonderful seventy-year-old maitre d'hotel of the Paris Opera, who taught Pavlova, Nijinski and so many others. Then I began lessons with Albertini, with whom I am still studying. Until the time should come when he could use me in pantomime Mr. Ames placed me, earlier this season, in a small part in "Saturday Morning" and in the production, which unfortunately did not have a very long life, when Guy Bolton and Robert Milton happened to see me one night when they were looking for youthful talent for "Oh, Lady, Lady!"

"Mr. Bolton made me a very nice offer to join William Elliott and F. Ray Comstock's company, and Mr. Ames consented to loan me to their management, so here I am and that's all there is to it."

"But that isn't all by any means."

Vaudeville and Burlesque.
Grace La Rue returns to vaudeville, appearing as the chief entertainer at the Palace Theatre this week. She will sing her newest songs. "On the High Seas" is another scenic sketch novelty to be offered. Bessie Clayton and her dancers will remain for a third week. Among the other acts will be Beatrice Herford, monologist; Joe Jackson, with his bicyclist; Lee Schlimmer, comedian, and Elsie Russer, singer and company, with a musical act.

interrupted Guy Bolton, who happened to come back stage during Miss Binney's modest recital of "How I Broke In." According to Bolton, who with P. G. Wodehouse wrote the book and lyrics for "Oh, Lady, Lady!" which by the way, in spite of war times, has proved the most popular and thus far the most financially successful of all the five annual Princess Theatre musical comedy productions, he and Mr. Milton never thought of Miss Binney as a dancer at all, but merely as a very attractive looking young girl who could play a very small part in the new musical attraction.

"But all the while she was rehearsing the maid's part Miss Binney kept saying, 'You know I can dance too. Really, I dance much better than I act,' and we kept saying, 'Yes, yes, but go on with the rehearsal.' However, she's a persistent little body, is Miss Binney, and finally, in a tone of 'for heaven's sake let's get it out of her system quickly,' one day we decided to let her show us what she could do. Some one played piano—the orchestra had already gone home—and Milton and I were utterly spellbound when we saw the child's exquisite dancing. We immediately got to work to find an opportunity for her to act as Carl Randall's partner in the second act, and the strange part of it all is that at this time we were interviewing one dancer after another trying to find some one good enough to share laurels with young Randall, who, as every one knows, is one of the cleverest dancers on the stage to-day."

Miss Binney, not satisfied with a speaking and dancing part, is now studying singing with Robert Homan, as she fully expects to be at least a prima donna next season.

The annual benefit of the Actors' Fund of America, directed by Daniel Frohman, president of the fund, takes place on Friday afternoon, March 1, at the Century Theatre. The programme includes a new one act play by J. Hartley Maunier, with Laurette Taylor, Pedro de Cordoba, Edmund Breece and J. W. Kerrigan. A novelty playlet by James E. Montgomery entitled "Backward" will be acted and spoken in reverse English by May Irwin, Louise Dresser, Cyril Kelsight, Harry Mestayer and George Spaulding. William Mack of Mr. Belasco's company has written a one act sketch in which he will appear. Jerome Patrick, Lionel Atwill and Harry C. Browne will introduce a new playlet entitled "Premeditated." This startling dramatic novelty is being staged by William H. Gibson.

Julia Arthur will appear in a special number and Vernon Styles, the tenor, will sing. Nora Bayes has prepared a novelty for the occasion which promises to be one of the features of this most unusual entertainment. A special feature of unique interest will be the presentation of a one act pantomime by the Amateur Comedy Club of this city. The cast will consist of Austin Strong, the dramatist; Henry C. Smith and Theodore Steinway.

R. H. Burnside of the Hippodrome will supply "The Little Foxes" with a "Little Foxes." This is the sketch that scored such an enormous hit at the recent Lamb's Gambol. Elmore De Clesinger of the Metropolitan Opera Company with 200 soldiers will appear at the opening of "The Star Spangled Banner" and 150 sailors and marines will sing the chorus girls from the various musical comedies will render Irving Berlin's new patriotic song at the close. This number will be led by Friar Sidney Jarvis. There are several other features still to be added.

The management states that there will be no no plays and no no tax at this entertainment, and that in consequence of the length of the programme the curtain will rise at 1:30 o'clock.

The Usacs are coming to New York city early in March with an original play of the musical comedy variety entitled "Goodbye Bill." As every one knows, the Usacs are the soldiers of the United States Army Ambulance Service camp at Allentown, Pa., and there is an unusual variety of dramatic and musical talent in the army of invasion which is to open up at the Playhouse on Forty-eighth street Sunday afternoon, March 1.

The book is the work of Richard Fechter and the musical parts are by William Keffer, both of New York and members of the service. Lieut. Adolph Menjou, who starred with Marguerite Clarke in the movies previous to his receiving a commission in the ambulance service, is supervising the production.

music by Rimsky-Korsakoff, the Russian composer, based on old Hebrew themes.

David Quixano, who plays an important part in "Girl of Mine" at the Bijou Theatre, has left "grand" opera for musical comedy, while it is the ambition of the average musical comedy favorite to star in opera.

Mr. Quixano's last important appearance was in Victor Herbert's "Princess Pat," in which he scored a hit in New York and on tour. Previous to that the singer was with the Minneapolis and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra company as soloist. Before that time he toured the country in an opera company.

Like nearly all prominent singers, Mr. Quixano first discovered that he had a voice during his high school days when he was a member of the glee club of his school. He often took part in the glee club concerts and also sang in benefits and concerts in his home city. Finally he was urged to forsake a prospective college career for one on the stage, and after much discussion his parents consented to send him to Europe for training. After several seasons of opera and concert



DORIS RANKIN
IN "THE COPPERHEAD"

work he decided to join a theatrical stock company in order to obtain training for a musical comedy career, as Mr. Quixano believes that musical comedy offers the widest range for his voice and theatrical ability.

Miss Marbury is loud in her praise of Mr. Quixano's voice and declares that he will have a brilliant future in musical comedy work, as his voice and temperament are both fitted for the requirements of this branch of the theatrical profession.

The company which will appear in "The Women on the Index," the new George Broadhurst production, left on Wednesday for Albany, N. Y., where the play by George Broadhurst and Lillian Trimble Bradley will have its first performance at the Harmonium Bleecker Hall. This is the play which is based on a short story by Frank M. O'Brien, and which appeared in "Mystery Magazine." The company includes Julia Dean, Eugenie Blair, Amy Ricard, Allison Skipworth, Camilla Daberg, Dagmar Godowsky, Lester Longman, George Probert, Frederic Burt, Frank Westerton, Roy Fairchild, Walter Lingham, T. Tamarato and J. P. Challice. The production has been made under the direction of George Broadhurst and Edward Elstner.

Freshest among the faces in "Flo-Plo" at the Cort Theatre is that of Minnie de Soria. Minnie de Soria plays "Flo-Plo" in the musical entertainment, for as her name, features and deportment indicate, she is herself of Spanish birth and origin. This is Minnie de Soria's first appearance in New York. After arriving in this country two seasons ago from her native Spain, she was engaged by Andreas Dippel for the role of "Flo-Plo" in the road company of Franz Lehara's "Gypsy Love," in which she travelled to all parts of America. Her chance for metropolitan recognition she owes to John Cort.

Minnie de Soria comes of a theatrical family, has been on the stage since she was 5 years old, and is known in Spanish operatic as well as dramatic circles. Her sister is Pilar Estuena, an emotional actress of the South and Central American States.

prano. Her success singing "Sonia" in "The Merry Widow" established her fame throughout Spain.

Arthur Hopkins announces that he has concluded negotiations with Mme. Nazimova whereby he will present the actress in a repertoire of Ibsen plays for the spring season at his Plymouth Theatre. The engagement will begin Monday, March 11, and during it is planned to present Mme. Nazimova, whose name is more closely identified with the dramas of the Scandinavian master than that of any other player, in several of the roles in which she achieved her greatest fame.

To begin the Ibsen season Mr. Hopkins has chosen "The Wild Duck," one of the most widely discussed dramas of the Ibsen series in spite of the fact that it has been less universally acted than a majority of the others. It has never been given in this country in English, but has been acted on the foreign language stage, the most recent presentations having been those of Rudolf Christians and his German stock company last season at the Irving Place. "The Wild Duck," however, has been a favorite vehicle of continental actors, and has been presented on several occasions in London. The most recent of these was Grandville Barker's production in 1905 at the Court Theatre, with himself in the role of Hjalmar and Miss Dorothy Minto as Hedvig.

"The Wild Duck" will be followed by revivals selected from "A Doll's House," "Hedda Gabler" and "The Master Builder." Which of these and the order in which they will be given has not been definitely determined, but the time devoted to each will necessarily be short because of the lateness of the season and Mr. Hopkins's desire to have the engagement as comprehensive as possible. The company that will appear with Mme. Nazimova is being assembled and rehearsals will be begun immediately. Settings for the productions will be designed by Robert E. Jones.

"Oh, Lady, Lady!" at the Princess Theatre, it may be interesting to know, is the fifth play running in New York this season of which Guy Bolton has been a coauthor. In this production

he collaborated with Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, on the book and lyrics, as he did also with three others of this season's vintage, namely, "Leave It to Jane," "The Riviera Girl" and the late Century review, "Of His Fourth Play," "Polly With a Past." George Middleton was his collaborator. Guy Bolton is still a young man. His literary career began at the age of 19 as a story writer for the "Smart Set" Magazine. He continued writing for the magazine until 1914, practicing architecture at the same time. In this year his first play, "The Rule of Three," was written and ran for several months at the Harris Theatre in New York.

In the summer of 1914 Mr. Bolton went to England and wrote a play with Horace Annesley Vachell. The war put an end to its production and he returned to America, producing "The Fallen Idol," a problem play, at the Comedy Theatre and then his first musical comedy, "90 Degrees in the Shade," at the Knickerbocker. A month or two later this prolific playwright produced the first of the Princess musical comedies, "Nobody Home," following it with "Very Good Eddie."

The same year, 1914, he wrote his first play with George Middleton. Finding, however, that this play had the same basic idea as one just commenced by George M. Cohan, Messers. Bolton and Middleton fused the two plays together and produced "Hill-the-Trail Holiday."

The next year, 1916, Mr. Bolton produced "Miss Springtime," an original comedy to which he adapted an old score of Emmett Kibbee's. During the same season he also wrote, this time in collaboration with P. G. Wodehouse, "Have a Heart" and "Oh, Boy!" Counting this year's sixteenth companies in the United States are playing in Bolton productions.

Mr. Bolton is by no means inactive even at the present. He has in mind writing the words and lyrics for a comedy for which Fritz Kreisler will write the music, and in which Mme. Namara (Mrs. Bolton in private life), will take the leading role.

STAR PLAYS ONLY A BIT.
Reeves-Smith Has a Small Part at the Belasco.

In the casts selected by David Belasco there is never an amateur. In his mind no part in a play is an incon-



DOROTHY MORTIMER
IN "THE KING"

sequential part. For the smallest roles he has therefore frequently selected stars, a fact admirably illustrated in his production of "Polly With a Past."

AMUSEMENTS.

at the Belasco Theatre, where H. Reeves-Smith, the celebrated English comedian, is seen in but one act of the comedy in a role which the average producer and the average star would deem unworthy such distinguished consideration.

Prior to coming to this country Mr. Reeves-Smith won many stellar laurels in England. He began his career on the English stage in 1878 under the sobriquet of H. R. Shafston with Miss Heath in "Jane Shore." He played "Richard Hare" in "East Lynne" for two years following; was seen 800 times in "Our Boys," a year in "The Private Secretary," 680 times in "Sweet Lavender," and enjoyed an engagement of nearly four consecutive years in "Charley's Aunt."

It was in one of his London successes that the celebrated Englishman made his first bow to America as the star in "A Brace of Partridges" under the management of the late Charles Frohman, when the latter assumed the management of the Madison Square Theatre in 1898. Having won New York approval, the larger cities of the United States were given a chance to see him before Mr. Reeves-Smith appeared again in New York with Ethel Barrymore in the original production of "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," in which he created the title role in 1901.

Some of his other most noteworthy American successes were achieved in "The Tyranny of Tears," in his association with Margaret Anglin in "Green Stockings," with Emily Stevens in "The

THE BROOKLYN PLAYS.
R. C. Carton's comedy "Lord and Lady Algy," with its original Broadway cast, will be given this week at the Majestic Theatre. William Faversham, Maxine Elliott, Irene Fenwick and Maclyn Arbuckle will appear in the leading roles.

"Turn to the Right," with the cast which played it for more than a year at the Gaiety Theatre, will be the Montauk Theatre's offering. In the company are Forrest Winant, Ruth Chester, William E. Meacham, De Witt Newing, Jessie Glendinning and Lucy Cotton.

AMUSEMENTS.

PLAYS THIS WEEK.

"The Garden of Allah," the stage version of Robert Higham's novel, will be presented this week at the Manhattan Opera House. The production will be the same as when it was presented at the Century Theatre. Mrs. Fiske in Philip Moeller's comedy "Madame Sand" will appear this week at the Standard Theatre. The production and cast will be the same as when the play was given its premier at the Criterion Theatre.

George V. Hobart's farce "What's Your Husband Doing?" with Hale Hamilton, after a two months run at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, will be this week's attraction at Loew's Seventh Avenue Theatre.

"Unchastened Woman" and with Laurette Taylor in "Peg o' My Heart," did seem to my thought a bit of a descent," explained the comedian, in reference to his present part in "Polly With a Past."

"That is until I got Mr. Belasco's angle," he went on to explain. "Mr. Belasco believes that the one talent is as important as the ten. He thinks that man or woman who can make a small part glow like a perfect gem a greater artist than the chap to whom the part he plays offers in itself such great opportunity. He is confident that the perfection of the small mosaic is as necessary to the beauty of the finished pattern as the larger, showier piece. It was with this in mind that he offered me the chance to create 'Princess Pat' in the wealthy uncle of the loveliest 'Pat' in 'Polly With a Past.' It has been a most interesting experience to me and one which has been so rich in results that I have just signed a contract for another season in this delightful comedy that has won such unstinted approval from the New York public and press."

Fred Niblo, the well known actor, is soon to be married to Enid Bennett, the motion picture star. Miss Bennett came to this country from Australia at the suggestion of Mr. Niblo while he was touring the world. Mr. Niblo was the husband of the late Josephine Cohan of the famous Cohan family.

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